



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

*MOHAMMED AND THE ISLAM OF THE KORAN*

CRAWFORD H. TOY

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

It is reckoned that Islam is now professed by from 150 to 200 million people, nearly one-seventh of the population of the globe. For thirteen centuries it has played a great rôle in the history of religion. Its adherents have been found among civilized, half-civilized, and barbarous peoples; its theory and its practice have traversed the whole gamut of religious thought and experience; it has sometimes been associated with the leadership of thought in Western Asia, Egypt, and Europe; and it has maintained its position against the assaults and seductions of neighboring faiths. It presents an interesting and perplexing problem to students of religion, of anthropology and psychology, and of the general history of civilization. Recent events have raised afresh the question of its achievements in the past and its possibilities for the future, and writers of various points of view and various degrees of knowledge and insight have discussed its genesis and its essential nature and the character of its founder.<sup>1</sup> It is the object of this article to state some of the questions thus raised and to examine briefly some of the answers that have been offered.

## I. MOHAMMED

Trustworthy material for the life of Mohammed, particularly up to the flight to Medina, is scanty. The only contemporaneous guide is the Koran, and the Koran, devoted, as it is, to the proclamation of dogmas and the organization of the young community of believers, has little occasion to give biographical details, which, moreover, were well known to his hearers and needed no mention. If we call in tradition to supplement the Koran, we find that this is an uncertain guide. The earliest Moslem biog-

<sup>1</sup> A list of some useful works on Mohammed and Islam is given at the end of this article.

raphers of Mohammed wrote long after his death, and the character of their works (in the form in which they have come down to us) is not such as to strengthen our confidence in the exactness of their information.<sup>2</sup> It is true that tradition (*ḥadith*) concerning the prophet was gradually organized into what purported to be an exact science. It was required that any saying attributed to him should be traced back through a line of credible reporters to some member of his family or to some person who was intimately associated with him. But we know little of the credibility of the intermediaries, and we have abundant evidence of the rapidity with which legend gathered about the person of the founder of the faith. The great traditionist Bokhari (810–870) brought back from an extended tour 600,000 traditions, out of which he selected and published 7275 as in his opinion authentic. When we consider the amount of impossible matter contained in Ibn Ishāq's biography of the prophet, we can hardly doubt that the mass of the later collections is of the same sort. It is possible that these contain some genuine reports of Mohammed's sayings and doings, but we have no certain means of distinguishing them; a critic's judgment of a tradition will be determined by his opinion concerning its consonance with the Koran or with some other authority held to be trustworthy, and in this procedure there is abundant room for coloring by individual feeling and points of view. Yet we are not left wholly without means of arriving at the facts of Mohammed's life. The uncertainties of the tradition pertain largely to dogmas and embellishments. What a man does under the public eye, particularly when he occupies a prominent position, may impress itself on the memory of contemporaries and be handed down with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and the general course of such a man's life may be fairly well known.

Mohammed was born in Mecca about the year 570 of our era. As there was no exact chronological system in Arabia at that time, the date of the event has to be reckoned from general indications. The tradition was that the year of his birth was that

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ishāq, the earliest biographer, died in the year 768; his work is lost, but a great part of it is preserved in a compilation by Ibn Hisham, who died in 834. Ibn Sa'd, the secretary of Al-Waqidi, died in 845; his biography is presumably based on the materials left by his famous master.

of the expedition of the South-Arabian Christian king Abraha against Mecca; this expedition is mentioned in the Koran (Sura 105), was a well-known and notable event, and would be a decisive chronological guide if we knew its date, but this we do not know. However, accepting the tradition that he was about forty years of age when he came forward as prophet, and fifty-one or fifty-two when he left Mecca for Medina (in 622),<sup>3</sup> we arrive at the year 571 or 570 for his birth. He was of the Hashimite clan—it was the Hashimites that stood by him, on the ground of kinship, in the time of his greatest trial in Mecca. Exactly what the social position of this clan was is not clear; its attitude in the Meccan period of the prophet's life was not that of an influential body—its men were brave and faithful enough, but could not hold their own, except by passive endurance, against the leaders of the dominant Koreish. That Mohammed early lost his parents appears from Koran 93 6: "Did not he [thy Lord] find thee an orphan and provide thee shelter?" He was cared for first by his grandfather and then by his uncle, Abu Talib. As the latter was a trader, according to the Meccan custom, the young man took part in commercial journeys to Syria and southern Arabia, and when he was about twenty-five years old entered the service of the rich widow Ḥadijah (Khadijah) as commercial agent. This turned out to be an important step for him—he married his patroness, and, though she is said to have been fifteen years his senior, the marriage proved to be a happy one; during her lifetime he took no other wife. For the next fifteen years we have no details, but it was doubtless a period of reflection. Mecca, the commercial, literary, and religious centre of northern Arabia, was a meeting-place for men of various views, and the young man, relieved by his marriage from pecuniary cares and enjoying an assured social position, could not fail to come in contact with the ideas that Jews, Christians, and Persians represented. Gradually, by processes of thought that are not recorded, when he was about forty years old, he reached the conclusion that one God alone was to be worshipped, and, not content with holding this belief for himself, he felt impelled to preach it to his fellow-townsmen as

<sup>3</sup> This date may be regarded as fairly well fixed.

a prophet of Allah, the successor of the great prophets of the past.

He spoke of his conviction first to his intimates, his wife, his cousin Ali (son of Abu Talib), and his freedman and adopted son Zeid. Encouraged by them he came forward publicly as a religious teacher claiming to be sent by Allah. He addressed himself first to individual men, and then boldly to groups of men. The Kaaba was the Meccan general place of meeting; hither came men from all quarters to pray (the Kaaba housed the gods of many tribes), and here the notables used to assemble and discuss the affairs of the city. Mohammed, going with the others to perform his devotions, took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him of approaching the chief men of the Koreish. He denounced the worship of the local gods, and proclaimed resurrection and final judgment, with paradise for those who accepted his doctrine, and gehenna for all others.

Now began a time of stress and strain for him and for Mecca. He deliberately and sharply set himself in antagonism to all the conservative elements of the people—to the popular attachment to the inherited religion, to the commercial interests which feared that rejection of the gods would alienate the surrounding tribes and imperil the trade of the city, and to the pride of the Koreish aristocracy, which resented the intrusion of a doctrine that threatened its prestige and its power. It was, in fact, nothing less than a social revolution that Mohammed proposed, the overthrow of present standards of honor and influence and the elevation to primacy of a man who did not represent the existing tribal authority. The boldness, not to say audacity, of his demand compels surprise and admiration. Naturally his speeches finally set the city on an uproar. At first, however, the opposition to him was quiet. He had few followers; the body of the citizens were against him, and they contented themselves with ridicule or contemptuous denial of his assertions. The Koran abounds in references to the charges brought against him. He was sneered at as crazy (81 22), as a soothsayer (52 29), or a magician inspired by a cursed satan (81 25), and as a poet (52 30, 37 35)—he was, in a word, described as a crazy or fanciful person, unworthy of serious consideration by a sensible man. The inclusion

of "poet" in the same category with "madman" and "soothsayer" is due probably not merely to the passionate element in poetry and the ravings of some who set themselves up as poets, but also to the fact that in Arabic a poet is a "knower," as the soothsayer also was endowed with knowledge, and both were anciently supposed to be inspired by some supernatural being.<sup>4</sup> Mohammed's earlier utterances resembled poetry in that they consisted of short phrases, passionate ejaculations; otherwise no man was ever more innocent of poetry than he, as his keen critics doubtless knew (for in that day the form of Arabic poetry was strictly regulated, and his discourses did not follow the rules), but they chose to ridicule what they called his wildness.<sup>5</sup> To all such scoffs he replied by positive denial, and indeed they were sufficiently answered by his preceding record and by his present procedure, which gave evidence of sanity and seriousness.

A more important attack on his claim to divine inspiration was the charge of pretence and falsification. His discourses, it was said, offered nothing new, they were only copies of old stories (68 15), which he caused to be written down morning and evening and then gave out as revelations from Allah (25 6 ff.); or, more definitely, it was alleged that they were taught him by a certain man (16 105), and he was, therefore, an utterer of falsehoods and an impostor. What man is here referred to as his teacher is not known; he was, presumably, a Jew or a Christian, and it may be assumed that Mohammed got narrative material, from time to time, from such sources. But he stoutly denied that he was dependent on men. If, said he, my accusers wish to sustain their assertion that my Koran is of human origin, let them bring something like it (52 33)—an effective argument, for no Arab could have produced anything like it in religious distinctness and elevation; and as to foreign aid he observed that a foreigner would have spoken in a foreign tongue, whereas the Koran was pure Arabic (16 105)<sup>6</sup>—a futile observation, for in any case he himself must have employed the Arabic language.

<sup>4</sup> Poetry and poets were, however, highly regarded, especially by the desert tribes, among whom were not a few men of poetical genius.

<sup>5</sup> And he, in his turn, hated the poets (26 224 f.).

<sup>6</sup> His insistence on this point constituted an appeal to the national feeling of his audience.

In addition to these attacks on Mohammed's sanity and truthfulness the Meccan critics objected to the manner in which his message, which he claimed to be divine, was said to be revealed, and to its doctrinal content. They took exception to the absence of visible supernatural features. What sort of apostle, said they, is this? he eats food and walks about in the streets like one of us—he should be accompanied by an angel as fellow-preacher, and should have treasure and a garden to supply food and other needs (25 8 f.); or at least some great man in Mecca or in Tayif should have been chosen as Allah's messenger (43 30). It was also shrewdly observed that the Koran, if it came from Allah, should have been sent down at once entire and not piecemeal, as, according to Mohammed, was the case (25 34)—for, they held, why should a divine message be given in dribblets? He seems to have felt the force of this objection, for about this time he received an admonition from Allah not to be hasty in demanding revelations (20 113). He might have replied that it was thus the old Jewish prophets received their messages, a word for every situation as it arose; but it is doubtful whether he knew this fact, and whether such an explanation would have satisfied the Meccans. As to his teaching, a bodily resurrection seemed to them absurd. We live and we die, they said; death is the end, time alone destroys us, and we shall not live again; if there be a resuscitation, bring our fathers back to life (44 33 ff., 45 23 f.). In defence of the popular religion it was urged, besides the appeal to the custom of the fathers, that Allah could have prevented the worship of the gods if he had desired to do so (43 19–21). To these arguments Mohammed replied that Allah chose his messengers (as, for instance, an Arab of Mecca) and sent his messages as seemed to him good; that he was all-powerful, and, as he had originally given life, could give it again after death; and that, having formerly permitted the religion of the fathers, he now sent something better.

The tradition has stories of persecution—the adherents of the new faith, it is said, were insulted, a few slaves among them were cruelly treated.<sup>7</sup> In the Koran (86 *al.*) there is mention

<sup>7</sup> One of these slaves was the Abessinian black, Bilal, who was afterwards the first *muezzin*; he was bought and freed by Abu Bekr in Mecca.

of plots, but no details are given. It does not appear that Mohammed's life was ever in danger; he was protected from extreme violence by his kinsfolk.<sup>8</sup> But as time went on and there was no sign that he would cease preaching, he became more and more obnoxious to the Koreish leaders. Probably their objection to him was rather political than religious; religious convictions sat lightly on the Arabs of that day, but the new doctrine was a menace to the power of the aristocracy. It was determined to adopt rigorous measures. First, however, a delegation went to Abu Talib with the request that he would dissuade his nephew from proceeding farther. Abu Talib's appeal was in vain; Mohammed remained firm, and the ties of blood held the Hashimites with him. The next step was more serious—the Hashimite clan was put under the ban, intermarrying and trading with it were forbidden the Meccans. The banned families retired to an outlying quarter of the city and there remained three years, suffering from scarcity of food; then the situation excited the pity and the indignation of some persons of influence, and the ban was removed. But the prospect of success for Mohammed and his teaching in Mecca was small, and he was forced to consider the possibility of establishing himself elsewhere. Some years before this, groups of his followers had gone over to Abyssinia, but had returned without accomplishing anything. He now bethought him of Tayif, a prosperous city lying about sixty miles east of Mecca; but his proposals were rejected by the people with scorn. It seemed as if his mission was a failure—he had made no marked impression on his native city.<sup>9</sup> There is no indication that the thought of surrender ever occurred to him; the Meccan suras maintain their unyielding tone to the last, but he must have been profoundly depressed. He seems, however, not to have abandoned his conviction of ultimate victory (though of his inner life we have regrettably few details), and he was a man of resource.

At the moment when things were at their worst help came from an unexpected quarter. Falling into conversation, at the season

<sup>8</sup> There is a vague reference to a murderous plot in the Koran (8 29).

<sup>9</sup> About this time also (619) death deprived him of two stanch friends, his wife and his uncle Abu Talib.



of the pilgrimage, with some men of Yathreb, he so impressed them that they agreed to present his claims to their fellow-townsmen. A year later (621) they returned with a favorable report and a definite invitation, leading men of the two Arab tribes of Yathreb (Aus and Khazraj) pledging their faith and promising obedience to him in all things. Still another year elapsed before the preparations for departure were completed. His followers had been withdrawing in small groups, and in June, 622,<sup>10</sup> he himself, accompanied by Abu Bekr, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the Koreish (who had got information of his purpose and wished to detain him), and reached in safety his new home, where he was received with enthusiasm. Henceforward it was known as Medina, "the city (*medina*) of the prophet." This sudden acceptance of Mohammed by Yathreb (in sharp contrast with the attitude of Mecca) appears to have been induced by a combination of conditions. The Yathrebites had long been in contact with certain Jewish tribes settled in their vicinity, and the doctrine of one only God could not have been strange to them; they had no such powerful conservative aristocracy as ruled in Mecca, and their city was not a great religious centre; the two cities were commercial rivals, and they of Yathreb were, doubtless, not indifferent to the honor of carrying off a prophet<sup>11</sup> from their Meccan brethren. However the upturning of opinion came about, it proved to be real and of high significance.

Installed in Medina, Mohammed of necessity changed his tone—he became dictator as well as preacher. After establishing public worship he turned his attention to strengthening his political position. The situation was not without dangers. The Koreish were his implacable enemies, and were superior to him in military force; the desert tribes were of uncertain disposition except in their love of plunder; the Jews formed practically independent, well-guarded communities, and had to be reckoned with; and in the city, while Khazraj was friendly, there were not a few men in Aus who yielded only a grudging obedience to the new

<sup>10</sup> This is the date of the *hijra* (*hejra*), the Mohammedan chronological epoch.

<sup>11</sup> They must have heard much of prophets from their Jewish neighbors, perhaps a prediction of an expected prophet who would do great things; and here was a prophet of their own nation!

government, and withheld support from it whenever they could do so without coming to open conflict.<sup>12</sup> These antagonistic conditions Mohammed met, on the whole, with skill. It was necessary to provide support for the Emigrants, the Companions of the prophet, who had left everything in Mecca to follow him, and were now largely dependent on the hospitality of the Medinan converts (the "Helpers"); this he attempted to do by attacking Meccan trading caravans. The first successful foray was made by a party of his followers in the sacred month Rajab (623), in which war was forbidden—a grievous offence against law; Mohammed was displeased, but condoned and in a measure justified the act (2 214). The next year an attack on the Meccan caravan returning from Syria brought about the first conflict with the Koreish (battle of Bedr), a Moslem victory that greatly strengthened Mohammed's position in Medina (8 9, 17, 42). A defeat at Ohod (625) was explained as a test, and final victory was promised (3 117, 145). On the other hand, a formidable Meccan attack (627) was repelled by means of an intrenchment (battle of the ditch), and this ended the war with Mecca. Meantime a certain number of the desert tribes had been won over, and the increasing power of Medina made it less and less difficult to secure the aid of the bedawin. The Jews were gradually disposed of. They made the mistake of underestimating Mohammed's strength and, in one case, of allying themselves with his enemies; occasions of quarrel arose, and the result was that two of the three tribes, Kainuka and Nadir, were banished (625), and the third, Kuraiza, was annihilated (627)<sup>13</sup>. The disaffected in Medina were now overawed and unable to give trouble. The remaining years of Mohammed's life witnessed some military reverses, but a general advance in power. In 629 he was permitted by the Koreish to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the following year the city fell into his hands without a blow. The idols were demolished, the Moslem worship was established, and he found himself political and religious master of Arabia. He took measures to organize and consolidate his government, made his farewell pilgrimage, and died

<sup>12</sup> These are the "hypocrites" so vehemently denounced in the Koran: they probably regarded themselves as patriots.

<sup>13</sup> See Suras 59 and 33.

two months later (June, 632), having seen his dream of victory gloriously realized.

As we are dependent for our knowledge of Mohammed's character mainly on the Koran, it is fortunate that we are able to fix the relative chronology of its parts with a fair degree of probability. Of the 114 suras, or chapters, the tradition assigns somewhat over four-fifths (comprising about three-fourths of the book) to the Meccan period, and within this period a division, based on the tone and material of the contents, into earlier and later suras may be made. In general the shorter and more rhapsodical suras are to be regarded as the earlier; as time went on, the prophet's discourses became more methodical, and in Medina he was naturally led to introduce much legislative material. No absolute chronological certainty is attainable, but the reader, whether he has the original or a translation, cannot fail to feel differences in the suras, and the headings "of Mecca," "of Medina," may be taken as a good general guide. The hints in the Koran may be supplemented, as is remarked above, by some statements of the tradition.

We get the impression that Mohammed's personality was an attractive one. He had the devoted attachment not only of his immediate family but also of strong and thoughtful men like his uncle Abu Talib,<sup>14</sup> Abu Bekr, and Omar, and many others, and the hostility of the Koreish was due not to his character but to his preaching. His bearing under persecution was generally dignified. The remarkable confidence that he inspired in his followers was probably based in part on belief in the sanity and solidity of his character. There are indications of tenderness also in his relations with his friends and with children. He seems to have been physically brave, as was natural in a man of his place and time—he bore his share in the battles with the Koreish. He showed moral bravery also in the stanchness with which he proclaimed and maintained unpopular opinions in Mecca. The story that, to conciliate the Koreish, he publicly admitted that the three goddesses, Al-Lāt, Al-Uzza, and Manāt, were intercessors with Allah, and that repenting he publicly took back his admission,

<sup>14</sup> Two of his uncles took a different attitude: Abbas long stood aloof from him, and Abu Lahab was his bitter enemy.

appears not to be authenticated. It may have originated as a legendary explanation of his positive declaration (53 19 ff.) that the three were mere names and that their worship was unauthorized by Allah. But if he publicly admitted his error and revoked his concession, it was a brave act. The theory of some late commentators that he did really make this admission, by suggestion of Satan, when he was out of himself and did not know what he was saying, is probably a mythical attachment to the affirmation (22 51) that there has been no apostle or prophet but Satan has approached him with wicked suggestions.

That he was of an excitable and passionate nature is evident from his violent outbursts against his enemies. His denunciations of the Koreish may perhaps be excused as condemnation of religious error and of antagonism to God; he is not behind them in exuberance and sharpness of invective—for every charge of craziness or falsity he has a countercharge of blindness or treachery and a threat of hell-fire.<sup>15</sup> His attitude toward his uncle Abu Lahab also may be regarded as religious hatred, but it was in part hatred of a personal enemy, not merely condemnation of a wrong opinion. The concentrated bitterness of Sura 111 is offensive: "May the hands of Abu Lahab and he himself perish! His riches shall not profit him. He shall be cast into flaming fire [*lahab* is "flame"], and with him his wife, bearing wood, a cord about her neck." It belongs to his nervous excitability that he had visions which he did not distinguish from real events. He mentions, briefly in a single sentence (17 1), the night-journey from the temple of Mecca to the temple of Jerusalem in the same tone in which he speaks of himself as an orphan cared for by Allah (93 6).<sup>16</sup> Twice (53 5-18) he saw the mighty one (probably Gabriel)<sup>17</sup> who was Allah's agent of revelation to him, once on the horizon, once at the lotus tree near the garden of the (divine)

<sup>15</sup> A prophet, identifying his opinion with the will of God, must necessarily be implacable toward religious opponents; compare Ezekiel's anathema against Zedekiah (Ezek. 17 11 ff.), whom he regarded as an enemy of Yahweh, and early Christian anathemas against heretics.

<sup>16</sup> This incident, referred to very simply by Mohammed, is enormously expanded in the tradition (Weil's translation of Ibn Ishāq, pp. 200 ff.).

<sup>17</sup> If Allah had been meant, the statement would have indicated him clearly.

abode. For the explanation of these visions (which are such as are not uncommon in the experience of prophets, ancient and modern) it is unnecessary to resort to the hypothesis of epilepsy. There is, in fact, no convincing evidence that Mohammed was an epileptic, and if he was indeed subject to epileptic attacks, this did not affect the sanity and cogency of his teaching. During his Meccan ministry he seems to have given much time to devotional exercises. Allah, he says (73), bade him rise from bed and devote the greater part of the night to prayer and the reading of the Koran; "Call on the name of thy Lord," said Allah, "devoting thyself exclusively to him." In Mecca he appears, in a word, to have been unworldly. While Khadijah lived she was his only wife; only after her death did he begin his remarkable accumulation of consorts, continued almost up to his last year. Some of these wives were widows of his followers, and it has been urged that he took most of them from motives of charity, to provide for them when they had lost their natural protectors. This may have been true in some cases, but in most of the marriages we have to recognize his passion for beautiful women.<sup>18</sup>

His intellectual qualities were such as are found in most religious organizers—insight and practical ability. Of erudition in our sense of the word there could be no question in the Arabia of that time. Learning consisted in the knowledge of poems and tribal traditions and sometimes of foreign stories—all acquired orally. Writings were few and there were few persons who could read them. The ideal man was a warrior and a robber (like the mediaeval robber baron); even poets were rarely masters of the mysterious arts of reading and writing. It is uncertain whether or not Mohammed could read and write. He several times (7 156, 158 *al.*) describes himself by an adjective (*ummi*) that may be rendered "illiterate" or "ignorant" or may mean "belonging to the common people"; in one place (29 47) he says that before the revelation of the Koran he could not read or write (or was not in the habit of reading and writing)—otherwise, it is added, his opponents might doubt; his ignorance or unaccustomedness in this regard is cited as proof that what he preached was from

<sup>18</sup> He married Sauda a few months after Khadijah's death, and took the Coptic maid Mary as concubine about two years before his own death.

Allah. He had a profound respect for the art of writing, which he says (96 4 f.) was taught man by Allah; if, however, he was acquainted with it, there is no indication in the Koran that he made use of it. The question is not an important one. Education in his day was not by reading and writing, but by observation of men and events, and he was a keen and intelligent observer, gathering facts from all quarters, and using them skilfully for his own purposes. Logical thinker he was not, but he had instinct that took the place of logic. He cannot be called a statesman, for he had no definite plan of political organization, but he accomplished much of what statesmanship aims to do. For many years it was Mecca that he expected to make his permanent home and the centre of his propaganda. Circumstances drove him to Medina, and there his course was shaped by events from day to day. He was always vigorous and determined, rarely headstrong. He was a born ruler of men, yet generally willing to listen to advice and be guided by it. A multitude of incidents illustrated his knowledge of human nature and his excellent practical judgment and power of achievement. It was demanded of him, for example, that he work miracles, but his good sense led him to disclaim the sort of power that his opponents had in mind; the Koran, he said, was his miracle.

He was a true prophet in the sense that he seized on and vigorously proclaimed certain fundamental religious conceptions much needed by the community in which he lived. He had also a gift not always possessed by prophets, wisdom to insist on the main things and to stop at the point where insistence became dangerous or fruitless. His whole career proves that he thoroughly believed the great doctrines he taught. Nor is there good reason to doubt that he believed himself called of God to preach. Possibly this conviction may have been suggested or strengthened by visions (such as are perhaps alluded to in 96 1 and 74 1), but its basis was probably his reflection and experience. He had come gradually to a practically monotheistic faith,<sup>19</sup> and believing this to be of prime importance for his generation, he could not

<sup>19</sup> One of his sons was named Abd Menāf, "servant of Menāf," a minor Ko-reish god. This was before he began to preach, at a time when he worshipped the local deities.

but hold that he was commissioned by Allah to proclaim it. His introduction of Allah as the dictator of his utterances is parallel to the usage of the Hebrew prophets, who preface their discourses with "thus saith Yahweh." Inferior though he was to these prophets in certain points, he had in common with them the consciousness of being divinely inspired. He bore himself, as a rule, with the dignity proper to the prophetic office.<sup>20</sup>

In his moral life there were conflicting elements. In his ordinary social relations, so far as appears, he was above reproach—he was honest, just, and kindly. He was disposed to show clemency to prisoners of war, except in cases where they had particularly angered him by ridicule, opposition, or barbarity. On the other hand, there appear in his conduct at certain times evidences of the dominance of passion, lack of moral clearness of vision, and abdication of personal moral responsibility. In his attitude toward his opponents it may often be hard to distinguish between the indignation of the apostle and the hatred of the man; but he rarely, if ever, shows moral discrimination in his judgments of his enemies. He does not apprehend the importance of the element of motive in actions, and he appears to have been incapable of understanding any point of view that differed from his own. The ground of the opposition of the Koreish to him was essentially the same as that of his opposition to them. In their eyes he was the enemy of the established civil and religious order; for him they were the enemies of the new order of which he was the representative. It did not occur to him to ask himself whether there might not be a patriotic motive, worthy of respect, in their antagonism to his revolutionary programme. Their tone is not commendable, neither is his. Both he and they were deficient in sympathy and in power of moral discrimination. From the point of view of political success Mohammed's mode of procedure proved to be good—reformers often have to be uncompromising and violent, and in the end the Koreish had to be beaten into submission; but his attitude was morally narrow, and has not led to the highest success.

<sup>20</sup> An instance of a less worthy regard for his dignity as ruler and great man is the injunction to his followers (49 2 ff.) not to talk familiarly with him or loudly in his presence; those who lower their voices, it is said, will have great reward.

Other sorts of moral weakness appear in his marriage to Zeinab, wife of his adopted son, Zeid. The account of the affair in the Koran (33 37) is of refreshing simplicity and directness:

When thou saidst to him on whom Allah had conferred favors and thou hadst conferred favors, "Keep thy wife and fear Allah," and, fearing men (though it is better to fear Allah), thou didst conceal thy thought that Allah had determined to make manifest, then, when Zeid<sup>21</sup> determined to divorce her, we gave her to thee as wife, that believers may commit no sin when they marry the divorced wives of their adopted sons.

In this displeasing procedure Mohammed's chief fault was not that he set aside a generally acknowledged social rule in order to gratify his passion,<sup>22</sup> but that he profited by his position as apostle and employed an alleged divine revelation to justify his act. It is a proof of his power in Medina that he dared to use the Deity as the minister of his pleasures, and that his followers accepted his explanation (for the thing was so bad that an explanation was necessary) without losing faith in him. This incident, however, is only one example of his conception of his relations with the Deity—Allah is everywhere his sponsor and guarantor. Allah is said to dictate or relate to him various Biblical stories (as in 28 2) and extrabiblical legends of the Ephesian youths in the cave (18 12), Alexander (18 82), and others; he must have known that these came to him from men. When it becomes necessary to abrogate a verse, it is Allah that substitutes another verse for it (16 103 f.). He avers that he has had no assistance from man in composing the Koran—it is all a revelation from God (16 105). It is hard to say what his mental attitude was when he made such assertions; perhaps he meant that he was giving the stories in their correct form and with a proper application.<sup>23</sup> In any case his theory of the transmission of truth is confused, and he discards responsibility by throwing the burden on Allah, who is thus

<sup>21</sup> This is the only case in which a follower of Mohammed is mentioned by name in the Koran.

<sup>22</sup> He was not guilty of adultery and murder like David in the affair with Bathsheba, but in other respects his offence was more heinous than that of the Hebrew king.

<sup>23</sup> He asserted that the Jews had corrupted their scriptures (3 64 f.).



made responsible for the prophet's historical statements. This is perhaps the greatest sin a prophet can commit—it saps the foundations of moral life.

In Mohammed's political career the deed that his apologists find it hardest to defend is his treatment of the Jewish Kuraiza tribe. It is referred to in the Koran (33 26 f.) in a matter-of-fact way as an instance of Allah's favor to the true believers:

The Jews who assisted the Meccans, Allah brought down from their fortresses and cast terror into their hearts; some of them ye slew, some ye made captives, and Allah bestowed on you their land and their wealth.

The Kuraiza violated their agreement with Mohammed and sided with the Koreish in the battle of the ditch (627). After the battle (in which the Moslems were victorious) the Kuraiza were besieged and capitulated, and, according to Ibn Ishāq,<sup>24</sup> Mohammed left the decision of the fate of the survivors to a certain Saad, who decided that the men should be put to death and the women and children sold as slaves—which was accordingly done. The Jews were guilty of treachery, and according to the existing laws of war deserved punishment, but not so bloody a one—they might have been deported, and would then have been powerless for harm. Whether or not it was by another man that the sentence of death was pronounced, Mohammed approved it—"it is Allah's will" he is reported to have said—and he is to be held responsible for it.

In passing judgment on these procedures it is only fair to take into account the ideas and manners of the time and the peculiar nature of Mohammed's situation. The custom of blood-revenge then existed, and the usages in warfare were barbarous; women sometimes accompanied an army, and after a battle searched for and killed wounded personal enemies. There was no conception of the sanctity of human life. The marriage-bond was not held to be permanent; temporary unions were not uncommon, and the woman as well as the man had the right of divorce. Up to the capture of Mecca (two years and a half before his death)

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Ishāq, pp. 688 ff., Germ. tr., pp. 107 ff. It is here said that the number of men killed in cold blood was, according to one report, between six and seven hundred, or, according to another report, between eight and nine hundred.

Mohammed lived in perpetual conflict. In Mecca the Koreish were hostile; in Medina there were, besides the Koreish, the disaffected in the city, the neighboring Jewish tribes, and the unreliable bedawin. It seemed to him necessary to control these dangerous elements by force, to remove or destroy them. He was a man of his time, and the time was not morally well-developed. Yet, making due allowance for these conditions, we must hold that a morally strong man ought to have risen above them.

The existence of features in Mohammed's conduct that appear from an ethical point of view mutually exclusive suggests the conclusion that there were mutually antagonistic tendencies and forces in his moral constitution. On the one hand, we find in him an attraction toward great religious ideas, and sympathy with the higher social code of the time. Other men of his time and people may have believed in a unitary divine government of the world and a judgment to come, but he alone took hold of this idea with such clearness, persistence, and enthusiasm as established it in the creed of Arabia and eventually in that of many neighboring lands. His prescriptions in the Koran (rules laid down, to be sure, primarily for others rather than for himself) show effort to lift the standard of the popular moral life. We may, probably, accept the tradition that in his early days in Mecca he was called "the faithful"—doubtless he was then trustworthy and morally exemplary. In the Koran he alludes to sins that he and his followers had committed (47 21, 48 2), but no details are given, and there is no sign of effort to overcome sinful propensities. On the other hand, he was in certain cases governed by passion—desire for revenge, love of sensual pleasure, ambition to rule; this ambition appears to have been the natural human craving for power intensified by the belief that as apostle of Allah he was invested with authority over all things. We may trace the conflict between the two sides of his nature throughout his public life, first one and then the other getting the upper hand, as circumstances were favorable to the one or the other. In Mecca, so far as the records go, the conditions brought out his more pleasing side. His domestic life seems to have been quiet and happy—his wife Khadijah, devoted to him and watch-

ful over him, is reported to have been a woman of firmness and good sense; and in the city, as he was politically impotent, there was no occasion or opportunity to assert himself except in warning his fellow-citizens of the fate that awaited them if they continued in unbelief. Soon after his wife's death he began to yield to that fondness for marriage that was to play so prominent a part in his life. On his settlement in Medina he found himself free from external authority. He was surrounded by enthusiastic friends, there was no one to call him to account, there grew up a belief that he could do no wrong; it was here that the lower side of his nature came to the front—he was at times self-indulgent, intolerant, despotic. Yet not always—when fear of opposition was removed, he could show himself kindly, thoughtful for others, lenient toward the erring. When Mecca was captured he treated the people with a kindness that won him their hearty allegiance. His address at the final pilgrimage, a few months before his death, when all Arabia was at his feet, is marked by dignity and tenderness. He spoke as one to whom God had committed the care for the temporal and eternal interests of his people, and with the happy consciousness that he had performed his duty and finished his work, leaving, in the Koran, a sufficient guide for this world and the next. Through all his temperamental conflicts he had kept steadily in view what gradually shaped itself as his aim in life, the establishment of a pure religion among the people of Arabia. It is this aim that gives unity to his life. He seems never to have lost self-respect and confidence in his mission and his power. To his devout followers in all ages he has been not a fallible man in whose bosom there was a war of impulses, but the type of perfect manhood. This devotion to an imperfect type might seem to exert an unfortunate influence on the ethical ideas of his disciples. Whether or how far it has done so it is hard to say. But the ill effects that might have followed blind imitation of him have been largely set aside by a process of idealization: whatever in his conduct or teaching has seemed to be opposed to the current ethical standard has been explained away by familiar exegetical methods; or, if some slight infirmity is admitted, it is held not to tarnish the beauty of a soul devoted to the service of God and man.

## II. THE RELIGION OF THE KORAN

To a modern non-Moslem reader the Koran may seem to be merely an ill-arranged mass of matter, much of which is trivial or irrelevant. Such a judgment, ignoring, as it does, the great rôle played by the book in religious history, would be superficial. It is true that we find many of the discourses tedious. They abound in repetitions of argument, invective, denunciation, self-assertion, legend, and myth, and they seem to be composed of scraps pieced together without regard to logical order. This half-chaotic form is due to the way in which the discourses were composed, uttered, and edited. A preacher who finds himself obliged to address groups of people for many years on a few leading topics necessarily repeats himself. It was in Mecca that Mohammed gradually put his ideas and his arguments into shape. When he began to preach, he had long since ceased to travel on commercial errands. It was in Mecca that he learned legends of Biblical and other personages and formulated his conception of the divine government of the world. Stories of prophets and descriptions of the day of judgment and of paradise and hell doubtless came to him in scraps, and were introduced by him into his appeals in this form. His discourses must have been somehow written down by his disciples, but as to who his reporters were and of their mode of procedure we have no information. It seems improbable or impossible that the discourses could have the literary form which they show in some passages in the Koran unless they were revised or dictated by him. Soon after his arrival in Medina he employed as amanuensis a well-instructed young man, Zeid son of Thabit by name,<sup>25</sup> by whom his words would be more exactly set down, and he may have had amanuenses in Mecca. But whatever revision or dictation there may have been in Mecca has not done away with the fragmentary character of the discourses. After his death the scattered reports of his sermons were collected and made into a book by this Zeid (by command of the Calif Abu Bekr in the year 633), and it was he who conducted the final revision of the text seventeen years later, giving it the form in which we have it. Though the revision was not formally as careful as it might have been (in

<sup>25</sup> His adopted son was Zeid son of Haritha.

the present text there are sentences syntactically incomplete), there is no reason to doubt that it has preserved Mohammed's utterances with substantial correctness and fulness. The Koran is the only sacred book in the world that is the composition of a single man. While this unitary origin gives it unity of thought and rhetorical impressiveness, it is a disadvantage so far as it confines the ideas of the book within the bounds of one mind and allows no escape from the intellectual and spiritual limitations of its author.

The religion of the Koran, like the religion of the New Testament, arose from the confluence of several different systems of thought, and its elements are in some important respects identical with those of the earlier book. But in the historical conditions of its genesis it differs notably from the latter. The New Testament took shape in an enlightened age, in an atmosphere of refined Judaism permeated with fresh and inspiring Greek thought. The birthplace of the Koran was a half-civilized community which was in some sort of contact with a stagnant Judaism and a debased Christianity. Mohammed's religious nourishment was drawn in part from the popular cult of Arab tribes, in part from the higher conceptions then existing in Arabia and elsewhere. The old Arabian material of supernatural beings was that which appears everywhere in the undeveloped Semitic world, namely, local gods, regarded as all-sufficient each for his community, and local spirits (*jinn*), mostly hostile to men, and attached to outlying regions not occupied by human beings. Arabia produced no great god, but in many places the local divine chief and protector had acquired a character of considerable dignity; so it was in the southern cults, Minean, Sabean, and Himyaritic, and largely also in the northern part of the country. In the region in and about Mecca the local divinity was generally known simply as "the god" (*al-ilah*, pronounced "*allah*"), and to this name Mohammed sometimes appealed as an argument for his monolatry: "when," said he, "anything happens, you say that Allah has done it."<sup>26</sup> He used the name in a sense different

<sup>26</sup> There is here, perhaps, an allusion to Hobal, the patron deity of Mecca. This deity is not mentioned by name in the Koran, but the Meccans would naturally think of him when they heard the expression quoted in the text; Allah, "the god," was for them their special god.

from that in which they understood it: they meant by it the local god, he meant the one only supreme God, so that his argument was little better than a quibble except for those who had got a higher conception of the Deity. How far such a conception had penetrated Mecca we do not know. Besides the Jewish tribes settled near Yathreb (Medina) and the Christian, Jewish, and Persian circles in the south, there was a line of christianized or half-christianized Arabian tribes in the north (extending westward from Hira), and Mecca was doubtless influenced by this body of belief, though whether it had touched the mass of the people is uncertain. The tradition tells of a small number of men who gave up the Arabian cult, accepting Christianity or Judaism, or holding aloof from both. It is in this last category that Mohammed belongs. He represents Arabian Semitism touched by outside influences; his was the constructive genius that selected what his time demanded, and made it real and potent.

In all religions the deity is the central figure, in all Semitic religions, and among these especially in the Jewish, the deity is external to man, transcendent and absolute, and in the Koran the quality of absoluteness is most distinctly stated and most vehemently insisted on. The divine administration of the world, issuing solely from the will of Allah, may be said to be the differentia of the Koranic system.<sup>27</sup> It is the distinction of Mohammed that he laid hold of this conception and maintained it with unflinching strictness against the current polytheism. This unshaken consistency he owed in part, doubtless, to his intellectual limitations—he was unaffected by difficulties that have troubled many other religious thinkers—but, whatever its origin, it has given tone to the Koran. In the Koran the aloneness of Allah and his universal creative power are assumed, and opposing beliefs are denounced as absurd and wicked.<sup>28</sup> The Arabian

<sup>27</sup> Allah's sway embraces everything, from the courses of the heavenly bodies and of empires to the details of Mohammed's management of his wives. He combines the functions of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and the protecting deities of the Roman household.

<sup>28</sup> For Mohammed a trinitarian conception of the deity was unthinkable, as, indeed, no Semitic people has ever adopted such a conception. His understanding was that the Christian Trinity consisted of God, Jesus, and the mother of Jesus (5 116).

gods are declared to be impotent, and a special argument is directed against the three goddesses known as "daughters of Allah," whose worship was widely diffused. They were originally local divinities, and this title seems to have meant originally that they were divine beings, just as the Old Testament title "sons of the Elohim" ("sons of God") describes certain beings as members of the Elohim class. Neither among the Hebrews nor among the Arabs do we find married gods or (except in the cases here cited) mention of a relation of parent and child between two deities. But in the Koran the word "daughters" is taken literally, and there is scorn for the supposition that Allah should be assigned children of the inferior sex: "what? you have sons and Allah daughters?"; "when one of them is told of the birth of a daughter, his face becomes black, he is distressed, he conceals himself from men, doubtful whether to keep [the child] to his disgrace or hide it in the dust."<sup>29</sup> Whether or not this consideration affected the Meccans we are not informed, but Mohammed put a stop to the practice of infanticide as soon as he came into power.

The argument in the Koran for Allah's governmental control of the world is derived from the phenomena of nature and of human life. Allah, it is said, has created all things, including human beings, *jinn*, and angels (and Iblis [*diabolos*] was originally one of the angels),<sup>30</sup> and has ordered things for man's comfort, the rain, fruits, cattle, waters, and ships that move through the seas; thunder also he sends to call forth fear and hope.<sup>31</sup> Stories of Pharaoh, Ad, Thamud, and other peoples are narrated to show that national experiences are produced by Allah in furtherance of his righteous plans (Sura 54 and many others). Sometimes, as for example in the stories of the Queen of Sheba (27) and Alexander the Great (18),<sup>32</sup> the narrator appears to be absorbed in the adventures of the hero or heroine and to lose sight of the appro-

<sup>29</sup> 53 19; 16 59 ff.

<sup>30</sup> 2 32; but in 18 48 he is said to be one of the *jinn*—a revised opinion, perhaps, to free the angelic host from so undesirable a member.

<sup>31</sup> 88 17 ff.; 55; 36 34 ff.; 27 60 ff.; 13 2 ff., 13 ff.

<sup>32</sup> He is here called Dhu al-qarnein, "he of the two horns," a name probably derived from the representations of Alexander on coins on which he is depicted with horns as the symbol of divinity.

priate religious teaching; the tests to which the queen is subjected by Solomon are neither religious nor dignified. But, in general, the narratives illustrate the fact that not even the mightiest kings and nations can maintain themselves against Allah's power. The legends are treated as veritable history, and were doubtless so regarded by the Arab masses. A certain man, it is said (31 5), amused the Meccans with rival stories (probably brought from Persia) seeking to seduce them from the truth; but such stories were denounced by Mohammed and (if they have survived) appear only in the later Persian literature.

Though Allah is thus throughout the Koran described as omnipotent, his power is practically limited and his plans to some extent thwarted by the old Arabian *jinn*, by the Christian figures of Iblis (the Devil) and his attendant satans, and by the men who are misled by these hostile powers. The problem of the quasi-dualistic control of the world is treated by Mohammed in characteristic fashion. The New Testament and the Avesta accept the rôle of the great enemy as a fact and offer no explanation of its origin; the Koran describes its genesis and attempts to harmonize it with Allah's supreme power. When Adam was created—so the account runs<sup>33</sup>—and the angels were commanded to pay him homage, all obeyed except Iblis, who refused to recognize Adam's superiority on the ground that the latter was created of clay, but he himself of fire.<sup>34</sup> Thereupon he was cursed and condemned to dwell in hell. He begged, however, to be respited until the day of judgment, and, this request having been granted,<sup>35</sup> he frankly announced his purpose to seduce all men except the chosen of Allah. The situation was accepted by Allah, who indeed employed Iblis and satans and *jinn* to lead men astray. His omnipotence was thus saved, but with the result that a moral question was raised which is not seriously considered in the Koran. As for the satans and the *jinn*, their functions are the same as those of Iblis, but with one exception: some of the *jinn* were well acquainted with religious history, knew of the book of Moses, came

<sup>33</sup> 2 32 ff.; 4 117 ff.; 7 10 ff.; 38 71 ff.

<sup>34</sup> That is, he was of the class of gods, and thus above a human being.

<sup>35</sup> A similar liberty is accorded the Evil Power in the New Testament (2 Thess. 2 9 ff.; Rev. 20 7 ff.), and is assumed in the Avesta and the Bundahish.



(invisible) and listened to Mohammed's reading (or reciting) of the Koran, became Moslems, and preached the faith.<sup>36</sup> Whether or not the intention in this account is to distinguish between the religious receptivity of the native Arabian spirits and that of the Christian and Jewish satans the Koran does not inform us; but the story bears witness to a belief in the adaptation of his creed to the whole universe, with, probably, the exclusion of the Devil and his immediate attendants.

Mohammed's conception of the Koran and its teaching is intimately connected with his doctrine of Allah's sovereignty. He describes it as the transcript of an original volume preserved in heaven: "We have made it an Arabic Koran, that ye may understand it; it is in the original book with us, exalted, wise" (43 2 f.):<sup>37</sup> selections from this celestial book were made known to preceding apostles, and appear as Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and now the final revelation has been sent down to the Arabs, explaining and completing all that has gone before. This grandiose conception of an eternal body of truth made known to men in parts, as they have been prepared to receive it, is maintained throughout the Koran, and the primacy and finality of the Arabic book is defended in ways proper to the time, with naïve assertions based on fortunate ignorance of history. Yet, though the Koran is innocent of knowledge of historical details, its general construction of the religious history of the world is remarkably simple, clear, and striking. It embraces in its view all the great religious movements known to Mohammed and combines them into a unity;<sup>38</sup> each fulfils its purpose, and is expected to retire at the appearance of the later and better revelation. This unitary construction of history appears further in the rôle assigned to Abraham. Jewish tradition represented Abraham not only as the great ancestor of Israel, but also as the establisher of true

<sup>36</sup> 46 28 ff.; 72 1-14; cf. Jas. 2 19; 1 Pet. 3 19.

<sup>37</sup> The rabbinical descriptions of the Tora as the copy of a heavenly book are, doubtless, figurative representations of the eternal significance of the national Law.

<sup>38</sup> It is doubtful whether Mohammed had any definite knowledge of Mazdeanism; its dual scheme is not mentioned in the Koran, and would naturally be incomprehensible or absurd to a strictly monocratic Semitic prophet.

religion in the world after the flood.<sup>39</sup> The Epistle to the Galatians (chap. 3) finds proof of the temporary nature of Judaism in the religion of Abraham, and Mohammed, enlarging this general view, goes back of both Christianity and Judaism, and makes the patriarch the representative and leader of the faith embodied in Islam (2 124 ff.). Abraham, he says (3 60), was neither Jew nor Christian, but *hanif*, moslem, not idolater. It was a happy thought on Mohammed's part to make Abraham his patron, an illustration of his power of seizing on a current idea, weaving it into his system and making it effective for his purposes. The old Jewish patriarch was acknowledged by both Jews and Christians to be a divinely appointed model, his distinctive characteristic was faith in the one only true God, and this was the essence of Islam—who could be so blind as not to see this fact, or so perverse as not to accept this original divinely-revealed religion? The proper signification of the term *hanif* is uncertain; it is used in the Koran as identical in meaning with “moslem,” that is, “one who discards the worship of all gods but Allah.”<sup>40</sup> There is mention of contemporaries of Mohammed who, independently of his teaching, were *hanifs*; these appear to have been isolated monotheists—there is no proof of the existence of a hanifite organization. The term, whatever its original meaning and application, gave way to the more definite “moslem,” which became the distinctive appellation of the new faith.

The Allah of the Koran represents in important respects an ethical standard far superior to that of its time. He enjoins, and maintains by future rewards and punishments, a moral code admirable for a peaceful society—he is the enemy of all conduct that interferes with the relations that should exist among the members of such a society. In one place (59 22) he is styled “the King, the Holy, the Giver of Peace, the Faithful, the Guardian, the Powerful, the Strong, the Exalted.” It is assumed throughout that he is just, in the sense that he treats men in this world and the next in accordance with their deserts; if he sends

<sup>39</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.* 1 7.

<sup>40</sup> Wellhausen (*Reste arabischen Heidentumes*, pp. 207 f.) thinks it is employed simply in the sense of “Christian”; but though it includes Christians, it is doubtful whether it did not also include any monotheists.

adversity on the good, it is to try them, and prosperity is accorded the bad that they may be led on to work out their own condemnation (19 76 ff.). He is merciful to mankind, bestowing on them all pleasant influences and products of nature, and merciful and forgiving to those who sin ignorantly, or, if they sin knowingly, afterwards repent (32 5, 41 1, and many other passages). In the latter part of Mohammed's ministry in Mecca Allah is frequently called *al-Rahman*, "the Merciful" (21, 25, 43, 44, 17 110), but this title appears to have been dropped in Medina, for what reason we do not know.<sup>41</sup> He is everywhere spoken of as gracious to believers and especially to Mohammed, and on those who obey him he bestows love (19 96). The character thus depicted is in general an attractive one. It must also be remembered that he represented an effective idea of brotherhood in society, not, certainly, the brotherhood of all men, but in a real sense the brotherhood of all Moslems. He helped to banish or diminish tribal animosities, and he dignified moral rules and made them more effective by giving them a divine origin and divine sanctions.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, traits of the old life cling to him. He approves or condones acts that are violations of a good social code. He indulges a revengeful spirit, he is violent and bitter against personal enemies; of such an one he says (96 15 ff.): "If he cease not we will seize him by the forelock, the lying sinful forelock—and let him summon his friends, we will summon the guards [of hell]"; the picture of the supreme God seizing an unfortunate mortal by the hair does not accord with a refined conception of the divine character. He dispenses the horrors of hell with a freedom that smacks of malicious pleasure. His conception of justice is largely determined by external conditions—the persons who deserve reward are those who truthfully acknowledge his supremacy and the leadership of his apostle, all others deserve punishment. In this respect he is the enlargement of the tribal god, who is kind to his own people and hostile to all other peoples. He is the embodiment of the spirit

<sup>41</sup> Perhaps because it was a foreign (Jewish) title of the Deity. It was also South Arabian.

<sup>42</sup> See the excellent injunction in 49 9–12, and cf. 3 97 (the bond of faith is stronger than the bond of blood).

of Arabia, and more particularly of the spirit of Mohammed, of whose virtues and faults his character is a copy.

In the Koranic religion, as in all primitive theistic religions, the problem of one form of governmental dualism, the relation between divine and human wills, is passed over without comment and without embarrassment. Allah is absolute governor of men, chooses for his own whom he will (42 6, 6 87 ff.), and no one can believe except by his permission (10 100); he is the creator of the soul, endows it with its capacity for good and for evil (91 7), and decides whether it shall follow the one or the other. Yet man is held strictly responsible for his deeds, every individual for himself, every one must bear his own burden (44 40 f.); at the last day no one shall make satisfaction for another, no intercession will be accepted, of men or angels (2 117, 53 26), except that of persons permitted by Allah. Man, in a word, is free (3 139). Happy is he who turns to righteousness, wretched he who turns to wickedness (91 9 f.). The question whether there is a rational order of the world would be alien to the spirit of the Koran; it is concerned not with devices of human reason but with the pleasure of the divine mind. And it is clear and consistent in its teaching that there is a moral order in the world. Allah's purposes, it holds, are all morally good and his ability to realize them is unlimited—whatever failures in this regard may seem to men to exist would be explained if men had greater knowledge—man's unbelief or doubt on this point results from his ignorance.<sup>43</sup>

The divine worship prescribed in the Koran is simple. Mohammed retained certain ceremonies that he found too firmly established in the affections of the people (or which, perhaps, were too highly esteemed by himself) to be discarded. Such are the pilgrimage to the Kaaba at the great annual festival and the ceremonies connected therewith (the compassing of the sacred building, the visit to the sacred mountain Arafat, the devotional season in the valley of Mina, the sacrifice, the casting of stones at the Devil). He himself reverently performed the pilgrimage

<sup>43</sup> This principle is illustrated in the story of Moses' journey (18 59 ff.). The prophet who is his guide does things that seem to Moses to be cruel, but they are shown to be wise and kind.

and took part in all the ceremonies. These, which are similar to customs found all over the world, had great religious significance for the Arabs as methods of bringing them into contact with the god of the place; exactly what they meant for Mohammed we do not know. He abolished some improper features, especially the going round the Kaaba naked, and made the rest obligatory on his followers.<sup>44</sup> The institution of the pilgrimage has helped to make Mecca the central point of the world for Moslems and thus to strengthen their sense of unity; and a peculiar importance is given the Kaaba by the statement (22 27, 2 119 ff.) that Allah assigned the site of the building to Abraham.

Mohammed, however, having before him the examples of communities of Jews and Christians, felt the need of a more stable and more devotional organization of his people, and took from the neighboring sects such arrangements as seemed to him appropriate and sufficient. Local places of worship (mosques) were established, one day in the week was set apart for public worship, and the order of service in the mosque, consisting of prayer, reading from the sacred scriptures, and an address, was copied from that of the synagogues and the churches. The choice of Friday for the sacred day was, doubtless, induced by the desire to have a day different both from that of the Jews and from that of the Christians. There is no mention in the Koran of officers of a mosque (62 9). In Medina, where the first mosque was established, the service was usually conducted by the prophet (4 103), afterwards by the calif, a governor, or other prominent man, or by a regularly appointed *imam* ("leader"); the sermon was delivered by the preacher (*khatib*), who might also officiate as *imam*, but in case of need any person might act as *imam*. There is no priesthood in Islam; sacrifice plays a subordinate part, and may be performed by any one in authority. The old-arabian *kahin* was a soothsayer,<sup>45</sup> through whom the will of the deity was made known. Contact with the god was effected by ceremonies in which little use was made of blood, and this con-

<sup>44</sup> 2 192-199, 22 25 ff., 37 ff.

<sup>45</sup> The corresponding Hebrew word, *kohen*, means "priest." The offices of soothsayer and priest go back to the same original, the magician.

ception is retained in the Koran—there are no communal meals, no substitution of an animal victim for the sinner or, in general, atonement by blood. The place of such procedures is taken by obedience.

All public religious ritualistic details and conditions of membership in a religious community are necessarily external and may be mechanical. In the Koranic scheme any one is a Moslem who professes belief in the aloneness of Allah and the apostleship of Mohammed, recites the daily *salāt* ("prayers"), gives the legal alms, fasts during the month of Ramadan, and performs the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his lifetime. The official *salāt* is not petition but recital of praise, to be performed a certain number of times during the day. The indication of hours of *salāt* in the Koran is not quite definite: "celebrate the praise of thy Lord before sunrise and before sunset and during the night and evening and morning" (20 130); "glorify Allah at evening, morning, afternoon, and noon" (30 17); "perform the *salāt* at early morning, at close of day, and at approach of night, for good deeds put to flight evil deeds" (11 116); "perform the *salāt* at sunset, at nightfall, and at daybreak" (17 80). It seems likely that stated times were established by Mohammed after a while (6 71), possibly the five seasons that became the custom (noon, afternoon, sunset, night, dawn). It is enjoined that the recital be neither very loud nor very low, and it is to be prepared for by washing. At first Moslems in Medina turned toward Jerusalem in prayer; later, in order to make the exercise purely Arabian, the place (*kibla*) was changed to Mecca (2 136 ff.). The proper attitude in prayer is prostration: David, it is said, fell down and bowed himself and repented (38 23): "Perform the *salāt* and pay the alms, and bow down with those who bow down" (2 40). No details of the prostration are given in the Koran; at a later time the *salāt* was defined by the number of prostrations (*rekas*) of which it consisted, and the performances tended to become mechanical. This official "prayer" is not, however, the only kind commended in the Koran. Servants of Allah are represented as addressing petitions to him for higher as well as for lower blessings. Abraham is made to pray in the following words: "O Lord, grant me wisdom and join me with the righteous; and grant

me an honorable report among future generations; and make me an heir of the garden of delight; and forgive my father that he was one of those who went astray; and cover me not with shame on the day of resurrection, the day when neither riches nor children shall avail, but only the coming to Allah with a pure [or, believing] heart" (26 83 ff.). Job prays to be freed from his affliction (21 83), Moses that he may be able to perform the divine commands (20 26 ff.), David for forgiveness (38 23), and the Ephesian youths for mercy (18 9). Such persons are regarded in the Koran as models for Moslems—the latter are commanded to turn to Allah with sincere repentance and ask for perfect light and pardon (66 6-9), being assured that he hears the prayers of his servants (2 182). The petitions in the opening sura (the *fātiha*, the Moslem "pater noster") are simple and comprehensive: "Thee we worship and of thee we ask assistance. Direct us in the right way, the way of those to whom thou art gracious, not those with whom thou art angry, and not those who go astray" (cf. 3 14 f.). Mohammed himself was in the habit of praying (9 85 and other passages). Little is said in the Koran concerning prayer for the dead. It is directed (2 196) that at the conclusion of the ceremonies of the pilgrimage the worshippers shall make reverent mention of Allah (or, have him reverently in mind) as they make mention (or, are mindful) of their fathers—a form of expression that suggests some sort of cult of ancestors. In old Arabia graves were sometimes shrines (and so it is now), but there is no trace of such worship in the Koran.

The two remaining prescribed duties have no religious value. In Medina contributions for the support of the Meccan immigrants were necessary, and such almsgiving was, doubtless, recognized as a social duty as well as a religious prescription; when this social situation ceased to exist (as it did very soon), the tax for alms fell into the category of state taxes, and no longer made appeal to individual kindly feeling—it was paid, of course, in obedience to the prophet's command. The establishment of the Ramadan fast was a mistake on Mohammed's part. The custom of fasting, which he knew existed among the Jews and the Christians, probably seemed to him useful for the promotion of piety (and his temperament may have made such abstinence easy

for him). But the fast inevitably became obstructive of devotion, and the absolute prohibition of food during daylight for a month made too great a demand on human power of endurance.<sup>46</sup> Asceticism has never been a feature of Semitic religion—where it exists in Moslem lands it is of non-Semitic origin—and this attempt to introduce it, in mild form, into Islam has not been religiously a success.

When we pass from external conditions to the inner religious life, the definition of the Koranic teaching is less easy. As, on the divine side, Allah's claim to obedience is the central point of doctrine, so, on the human side, man's attitude toward this claim is the controlling fact. Sin is the violation of divine law, and in the Koran all law, the ethical as well as the religious, is divine. The Koranic moral code is excellent—it includes respect for human life and property in ordinary social conditions, and for the marriage relation (polygamy and the right of divorce being conceded), justice in commercial transactions, kindness to orphans, to divorced women, to the poor, and to believers in general.<sup>47</sup> It does not distinctly recognize the claims of all men, without distinction of race or creed, to sympathetic treatment. The summary in 2 172 is authoritative:

Righteousness does not consist in turning the face [in prayer] to the east or the west, but belongs to him who believes in Allah and the last day, and in the angels, the book [that is, the Koran] and the prophets—who gives money (though he loves it) to his kindred, to orphans, to the needy and the wayfarer, and to those who ask for it, and for [the redemption of] captives; and performs the *salāt*, and pays the [prescribed] alms; and to those who keep their agreements, and are patient in times of adversity.

It is of course taken for granted that Moslems will obey the ethical law. But the stress is laid on the religious law, and naturally the fundamental sin is unbelief. It is against the unbelief of

<sup>46</sup> The length of the fast was, perhaps, suggested by that of the Christian Lent. In modern times the smoking of tobacco has been included in the prohibitory rule. It is said that there is more quarrelling in Ramadan than in any other month of the year.

<sup>47</sup> The civil code, like that of the Old Testament, recognizes the *lex talionis* (2 173 ff.).



Ad, Thamud, and Madian, idolaters, pretending friends (the "hypocrites"), and *jinn* that denunciations are hurled throughout the Koran. The violence of the invective, the furious hate, shows the importance that was attached to the profession of belief in Allah and his apostle, and indeed it was a matter of life and death for Islam to secure this adhesion in Arabia. Hence Mohammed's detestation of the Jews, who refused to change their faith. The question how to treat Jews and also Christians was an embarrassing one for him. They formed a class by themselves—in respect that they did not accept Islam they were unbelievers, but in respect that they followed the divinely accredited prophets Moses and Jesus, they could not be regarded as idolaters or as enemies of Allah. In some passages they are regarded as entitled to future reward, the only condition being that they believe in God and the last day and do what is [morally] right (2 50, 5 73).<sup>48</sup> In one place they are mentioned along with those who join other gods with Allah, and it is said that Allah will decide between them on the day of resurrection (22 17).<sup>49</sup> Later, the obstinate opposition of the Jews led the prophet to declare that the curse of Allah was on them (2 82 ff.), and Christians are denounced as infidels for their worship of Christ and Mary along with Allah (5 17 ff.). Finally, protection is accorded the non-idolatrous dissentient sects on condition of their paying tribute (9 29).

In the Koran "faith," or "belief," is the acceptance of Mohammed's creed and mission. In Mecca this test divided the people into two parties, headed respectively by Mohammed and the Koreish; in Medina the civil and the religious governments became one—acceptance of Islam was a necessary condition of citizenship. Thus the term "belief" received a political coloring, and political passion entered the Islamic propaganda. There is no attempt to define belief as a spiritual force or to trace the shades and moral significance of unbelief. Trust in God there is—it is the conviction that Allah would give the victory to his apostle, a conviction that appears to have sustained him

<sup>48</sup> With them are included the Sabians, an obscure Christian sect.

<sup>49</sup> Here the Magians also are included. Mohammed seems to have known nothing of Zoroastrianism beyond the fact that it was not idolatrous.

in adversity and made him despotic (though his despotism was sometimes tempered with kindness) in prosperity. Unbelief is regarded as a wilful opposition to truth, to be crushed, when argument is unavailing, by the strong hand of God or man.

Sin is taken (as in the Old Testament) as an obvious fact of human life, and no curiosity is expressed as to its psychological origin.<sup>50</sup> The account of Adam's initial transgression is identical with that in Genesis (2 33 ff., 7 18 ff.), but it is added that he was taught by Allah the proper form of words (that is, in asking for pardon), repented, and was forgiven.<sup>51</sup> He does not transmit a sinful nature to his descendants,<sup>52</sup> but he is a warning to them. The tempter was Satan, and the satans have been appointed by Allah patrons of unbelievers (7 26). There is no conception of spiritual regeneration or spiritual struggle in the Koran. The point of view is purely objective in the sense that regard is paid merely to deeds. A man fails to believe because he is blind, he believes because he comes to see; but there is no distinct statement concerning a reconstruction of his spiritual nature. This objective conception was suited to Mohammed's time and people, and has commended Islam to many persons since his time.

Life is held to consist of one act of faith and a mass of religious and general social acts, and these are to be rewarded or punished. The rewards and punishments are relegated to the future<sup>53</sup>—in this life a pious man may suffer and a wicked man may prosper, but this will not be the case hereafter. The descriptions of future recompenses are couched in naïvely sensuous terms, relating to food and drink, the possession of pure and beautiful wives, and other such pleasures; they are to be taken literally—there is nothing in the text to suggest that they are meant to be under-

<sup>50</sup> Mohammed, as is noted above, often confesses that he is a sinner, but the nature of his sin is not stated.

<sup>51</sup> Eve is included in the history, but merely as the companion of Adam; she is not the first transgressor.

<sup>52</sup> The statement that the Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam (7 171) is simply an expression of descent; so in Heb. 7 5, 10.

<sup>53</sup> The vanity of earthly things is insisted on in 57 19, 47 38, 16 78.

stood figuratively;<sup>54</sup> but the pleasures, though sensuous, are not sensual or in any way immoral. The details of punishment are such as are found in early Christian apocalypses and are repeated in the *Divina Commedia*. The accompaniments of the last day also are taken from Christian sources: the blast of the trumpet, the cleaving of the heavens, and the scattering of sun, moon, and stars; the shattering earthquake, when the mountains shall pass away, and the earth shall cast forth the contents of its graves; when all men shall rise, clothed in their bodies,<sup>55</sup> and shall stand before the judgment-seat, alongside of which the angels are drawn up in ranks; to every man his record-book is given—those into whose right hands the books are given pass on to the joyful life; those who receive their books in their left hands or behind their backs pass into hell.<sup>56</sup> There is no appeal from the divine decision, and no end to the happiness and the misery. The determining fact in any person's record is his or her attitude toward Islam. Women, no less than men, may obtain the bliss of paradise (33 31 ff., 40 43), but what their relation will be to the celestial wives<sup>57</sup> is not explained. Nor is there any clear statement regarding the lot of believers who live immoral lives on earth. We expect the ethical character of deeds to be considered: "On that day men shall go forward in separate groups to see their deeds; and he who shall have done good of the weight of an ant shall see it, and he who shall have done evil of the weight of an ant shall see it" (99); and in many passages good works are spoken of as a condition of acceptance with Allah and as the best possession of a man (3 79, etc.). But the good works referred to are often clearly not ethical but doctrinal and ritual,<sup>58</sup> and the righteous are defined as those who keep the requirements of Islam (almsgiving and the rest). The Koranic teaching is

<sup>54</sup> Apparently, believers pass immediately at death into paradise (3 152). And there are suggestions of something better than sensual pleasures, a general happy peace. But of spiritual delights nothing is said.

<sup>55</sup> The idea of bodily resurrection was taken by Mohammed from the Jews and the Christians.

<sup>56</sup> See suras 75-101; 39 68 ff.; 3 193.

<sup>57</sup> The *huris* (56 22 ff., 34 f.).

<sup>58</sup> In 6 121 the eating of forbidden food is described as "iniquity." In 9 112 ff. the requirements are: to fight for Allah's cause, to fast, bow down, and worship, to command what is just and forbid what is evil, and observe the ordinances of Allah.

definite that unbelievers (leaving aside the doubtful case of the dissident monotheistic sects) are to be cast into hell;<sup>59</sup> and we get from the text the definite impression that there is no doubt about the future felicity of those who continue firm in faith. Perhaps it is taken for granted that such believers will not persist in things morally wrong—for slips in conduct there is repentance, and Allah is merciful and gracious; and even at the last judgment there is provision for intercession by persons (angels and Mohammed) to whom Allah grants this privilege.<sup>60</sup> The admission that a believer might possibly fail to enter paradise because of moral delinquencies would have been discouraging to the Moslems of Mohammed's day, a time when it was all-important to keep the support of all his followers.

The religion of the Koran regards man as standing alone in the presence of God, a free agent before an absolute lord. In spite of Iblis, satans, and *jinn* Allah is omnipotent, and in spite of Allah's omnipotence man is master of his fate. Obedience is all that is required of him, and he may obey or not as he may please. There is no intermediary between him and his divine judge—Mohammed is a man and, like other men, must ask forgiveness for his sins, and such intercession as is casually mentioned in the Koran is controlled (allowed or forbidden) by Allah, and seems to have no practical importance. There is no atoning ceremony—pardon is granted in response to repentance and prayer. All intermediate persons and conditions are swept away—so far as a man's future welfare is concerned, there are only two Powers in the universe, himself and Allah. Allah does not inquire curiously into motives and other inner experiences—these are left to manifest themselves in deeds. Nor does he expect intimate communion of soul between himself and believers—he is, indeed, too exalted for such converse, he understands man and the world, but man cannot understand him, and he confines his demands on men to what they are capable of. The Moslem of the Koran is not an analytical thinker or a searcher of his own heart; his life is made up of outward things, like that of the warrior of the desert. The Koranic ethical standard has a similar external

<sup>59</sup> Apostates may repent, and be forgiven, provided they do not go on in unbelief (3 79 ff.).

<sup>60</sup> Sura 2 256; 9 81.

character—it does not define or insist on inward truthfulness, self-sacrifice, love. The moral rules do not contemplate non-moslem communities; it is assumed that all the world ought to be Moslem, and those peoples that stand aloof must take the consequences—the legislation is not for them. The ethical experience of Islam has been similar to that of other religions: the theoretical acceptance of rules does not necessarily carry with it obedience to them in actual life. The most humane and benevolent of Koranic prescriptions—that which relates to brotherhood among believers—was set at naught, not long after the prophet's death, in bloody conflicts between rival parties. This fact, however, must not blind us to the excellence of Mohammed's moral code, or to the unifying and inspiring tendency of his conception of the unitary divine government of the world and the equality of all believers, without distinction of sex, social position, or nationality, in the eyes of the divine overlord.

### III. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE KORANIC FAITH

Both the vigor and the flexibility of the religion of the Koran are illustrated by its later fortunes. Though it was, in a real sense, the product of its age, it was put into shape by the hand of a master whose genius or instinct taught him to make universal ideas prominent and to reduce accessories almost to a minimum. During the prophet's lifetime all Arabia submitted to him, and in the centuries succeeding his death Islam spread over Western Asia, Egypt, the north coast of Africa, and the south of Spain, then over parts of Central Asia, China, Indonesia, the Philippine Islands, Central Africa, and Northern and Southern India, finally gaining a foothold in Eastern Europe. Its conquests in these lands were accomplished sometimes by force, sometimes by peaceful social pressure, sometimes by its moral and intellectual superiority, sometimes by a combination of two or more of these influences. In the majority of cases its propaganda appears to have been carried on by peaceful means. Political and social rewards, which were all in the hands of the conquerors, proved to be a powerful inducement to conversion. There was often a social fusion of conquerors and conquered, and this was

accompanied by mutual religious influence. The conquered peoples, while adopting Islam, retained every one its native intellectual and religious coloring, and contact with ancient culture (mainly through translations of Greek works) brought new points of view and new constructions of religious thought and life. These conditions produced certain modifications of the Koranic scheme in various parts of the Moslem world.

When a higher religion is nominally accepted by an undeveloped community, it often happens that old ideas and usages are retained, with new names taken from the new creed, or without an attempt to harmonize the two schemes. This has been the case in the history of Islam in certain regions, just as, in mediæval and modern Europe, the popular religion kept and still keeps heathen customs and beliefs, with a veneering of Christian forms. In northern Arabia the worship of ancestors is widely practised by the desert tribes, and in the south of the peninsula crude fetishistic and magical observances are found. Similar ideas and customs exist in Egypt and Morocco and among certain African tribes. Or, Moslems, living in communities with well-organized religious systems, sometimes conform to a greater or less extent to the usages of their neighbors—in India Brahmanistic customs are adopted by not a few Moslems (mostly of the lower class), in China many of the faith have taken part in the official worship of Confucius, and have thus often escaped persecution. In none of these cases, however, is there any desire to modify or reinterpret the creed of the Koran. They are merely concessions to traditional beliefs or to pressing considerations of peace and safety. In Spain, when the Christians got the upper hand, many Moslems and Jews gave in their adherence to the church, and kept their devotion to Mohammed and Moses respectively.

An interesting definition of the teaching of the Koran on one point was occasioned by the growth of the Moslem empire. In the ninth sura it is ordered that idolaters (except those with whom treaties had been made) should be attacked<sup>61</sup> until they accepted Islam, and that Jews and Christians should be forced to become

<sup>61</sup> The verb is sometimes *jahad*, "work earnestly" for the cause, sometimes *qatal*, "kill"; the two are here often synonyms. The noun *jihād* is practically "sacred war."

Moslems or to pay tribute. This order contemplated Arabia only, but embassies were sent to the emperor Heraclius, the king of Persia, the governor of Egypt, the Persian viceroy of Yemen, and the Negus of Abyssinia, calling on them to embrace Islam, and under the first califs Syria, Egypt, and Persia were attacked and conquered. The question has arisen whether or not the Koran requires Moslems to attack all non-moslem peoples and force them to accept the faith or pay tribute. Moslem jurists have generally decided this question in the affirmative, but political relations have decided it otherwise. Moslem rulers have been governed by the ordinary human desire for power and by the regulations of war that have been agreed on among civilized nations. The sultan of Turkey (who, as calif, is the ecclesiastical head of the Moslem world) is simply one ruler among many, and must conduct negotiations like any unbeliever. This, then, is a case where the exegesis of a sacred book has been determined by political conditions.

Increase of luxury and non-koranic superstition in the Moslem world occasioned movements of reform, particularly in Africa and Arabia. The Berbers of the Maghreb, an intellectually dull but emotionally excitable people, incapable of apprehending the finer side of the teaching of the Koran, were zealots for the letter of law; they felt lost without visible supernatural guidance, and readily followed men who proved themselves holy by the rigidity of their obedience to ritual and by their ascetic observances. In the eleventh century the Morabits<sup>62</sup> (Almoravides), under such guidance, undertook to do away with excessive official taxes and other customs not sanctioned by the Koran. They ruled for a time in Morocco and southern Spain, but succumbed to the corrupting influences of their position, and in the twelfth century were crushed and followed by the Mowahhids, or Mohads (Almo-hades), who maintained the unity of God against the low forms of saint-worship that then prevailed.<sup>63</sup> The most important attempt

<sup>62</sup> This term has come into English in the French form *marabout*.

<sup>63</sup> It is noteworthy that these unitarian Berbers, affected by the culture of Moslem Spain, became patrons of learning, especially of philosophy. It must be added, in justice to the Berbers, that in the fourteenth century they produced Ibn Haldun, the greatest of the Moslem historians.

at reform was that of the Arabian Wahhabis, who in the eighteenth century instituted a vigorous crusade against luxury (silks, satins, and tobacco) and saint-worship, and advocated an uncompromising literalism; they still exist in Arabia and India, but have lost their power as an organization. While these movements produced no new doctrine, they show the vitality of the Koran as a guide of religious life.

Persia has been the home of doctrinal reinterpretations of the sacred book of Islam. Partly by accidental historical relations, but mainly through native tendencies and the influences of foreign thought, she has continued for twelve centuries to construct at intervals systems and forms of religion which, assuming to rest on the Koran, introduce conceptions that are to a greater or less extent alien to those of Mohammed and his people. The prophet bitterly denounced the worship of any being but Allah, he had, apparently, never heard of the idea of the incarnation of God, his temperament was distinctly not ascetic or mystical, and he was at the farthest possible remove from a philosophical construction of the world; yet all these things found acceptance among certain of his followers.

The peculiar position of the fourth calif, Ali (Mohammed's cousin and son-in-law), led a large body of the Persian Moslems (the Shiite sect) to regard him as the only legitimate successor of the prophet in the headship of Islam, and Aryan thought divinized him and Mohammed and paid them divine worship. The headship of Ali was continued in the imams (leaders) who followed him, and the seventh (or twelfth) of these was to be the Mahdi ("he who is divinely directed") and to introduce the universal and final religion. One branch of this sect, the Ismailic, organized one of the most remarkable systems of propaganda that the world has ever seen, and promulgated in the name of the prophet doctrines of incarnation, inspiration, and freedom from the rules of morality that completely extinguished the teaching of the Koran. Passing into Africa, the Ismailians established the Fatimide dynasty in Egypt, and the mad calif Hakim (996-1021) was hailed as an incarnation of God and became the centre of the religion of the Druses.

In the opposite direction from this demand for incarnate super-



natural guidance was the cultivation of philosophy, introduced to the Moslem world in the ninth century by translations of Greek works, and pursued with great zeal in Bagdad, Cordova, and elsewhere. The Moslem philosophers eliminated local and anthropomorphic features from the Koran, maintained the freedom of the will, denied that the Koran was eternal, and in general rationalized religion. A protest against such reliance on human reason was made by the mystics (sufis, fakirs, dervishes), who found the basis of religious faith in the experiences of the soul.<sup>64</sup> Man, it was held, might come to an immediate perception of God, would be freed from the burden of dependence on external authority (including that of the prophet), and would become in essence a part of the divine nature. The more intellectually and morally refined mystics (of whom Al-Ghazzali was the most eminent) sought to find sanction for their view in the Koran while ignoring almost completely its conception of religion.

In recent times contact with European thought has led many devout Moslems to what is really a reconstruction of Islam. The cruder elements of the Koran are discarded, its conception of Allah and its eschatology are purified, the character of Mohammed is idealized, and in general Islam is made into what is regarded as a perfect system of religious thought. In such reconstructions, as in the cases mentioned above, the believer holds fast to his loyalty to the Koran. In some eclectic systems, as in Bahaism (an offshoot of Babism) and in the quasi-universal scheme of the Panjab Messiah, the Koran, though not considered supreme, is given a leading or eminent place. The Moslem world at large is indifferent to puritanical reforms and rationalistic and philosophical speculations. Its religion is simply the religion of the Koran—that is, with many heathen survivals, crudities, and inconcinnities, it believes in the sole sovereignty of Allah and the practical infallibility of Mohammed, and this belief is a bond of religious (but not of political) union.

<sup>64</sup> The separate existence of the soul as an entity is assumed in the Koran, but there is no discussion or explanation of its nature and powers, or of its relation to the body.

## SELECTED LIST OF BOOKS OF REFERENCE

- Translations of the Koran by Sale, 1734, Rodwell, 1861 and 1878 (the most convenient), and Palmer, 1880.
- G. Weil, *Das Leben Mohammed's nach Mohammed Ibn Ishaq bearbeitet von Abd el-Malik Ibn Hischam*, 1864.
- Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chaps. 50 f.
- Carlyle, "The Hero as Prophet," in his *Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History*, 1846.
- E. Renan, "Mahomet et les origines de l'Islamisme," in *Études d'histoire religieuse*, 1857, 8th ed., 1897, Eng. transl. 1864.
- Sir William Muir, *Life of Mahomet*, 1858-1861 (full, but biassed).
- Id.*, *Mahomet and Islam*, undated, ca. 1894 (a short, impartial biography).
- Id.*, *The Caliphate*, 1891.
- Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte des Korans*, 1860 (investigates the chronological order of the suras).
- Id.*, "The Koran," and "Islam," in *Sketches from Eastern History*, Eng. transl. 1892 (very valuable).
- A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammed*, 1861-1865 (has much useful material, but his account of the sources of Mohammed's teaching is not borne out by the facts).
- Syed Ahmed, *Essays on the Life of Mohammed and subjects subsidiary thereto*, 1870 (apologetic, but good).
- Ameer Ali, *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, 1873 (also apologetic, and excessively laudatory).
- Id.*, *Islam*, 1897 (a convenient summary of doctrine).
- R. Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 1875 (good).
- A. Müller, *Der Islam im Morgen- und Abendland*, 1887 (the best general history).
- J. Wellhausen, "Reste Arabischen Heidentumes," and "Medina vor dem Islam; Mohammed's Gemeindeordnung von Medina," third and fourth parts of his *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, 1884-1892 (of prime importance).
- T. P. Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, 1896 (useful for information concerning Moslem usages).
- T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 1896 (good sketch of the spread of Islam).
- H. Preserved Smith, *The Bible and Islam*, 1897 (excellent account of what Islam took from Old Testament and New Testament).
- D. B. Macdonald, *Aspects of Islam*, 1911 (instructive descriptions of Moslem thought, partly from personal observation).
- Articles, "The Koran," in Johnson's *Universal Cyclopaedia*; "Mohammed," in *La grande encyclopédie*; and "Mahomet," and "Mohammedan Religion," in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition.